



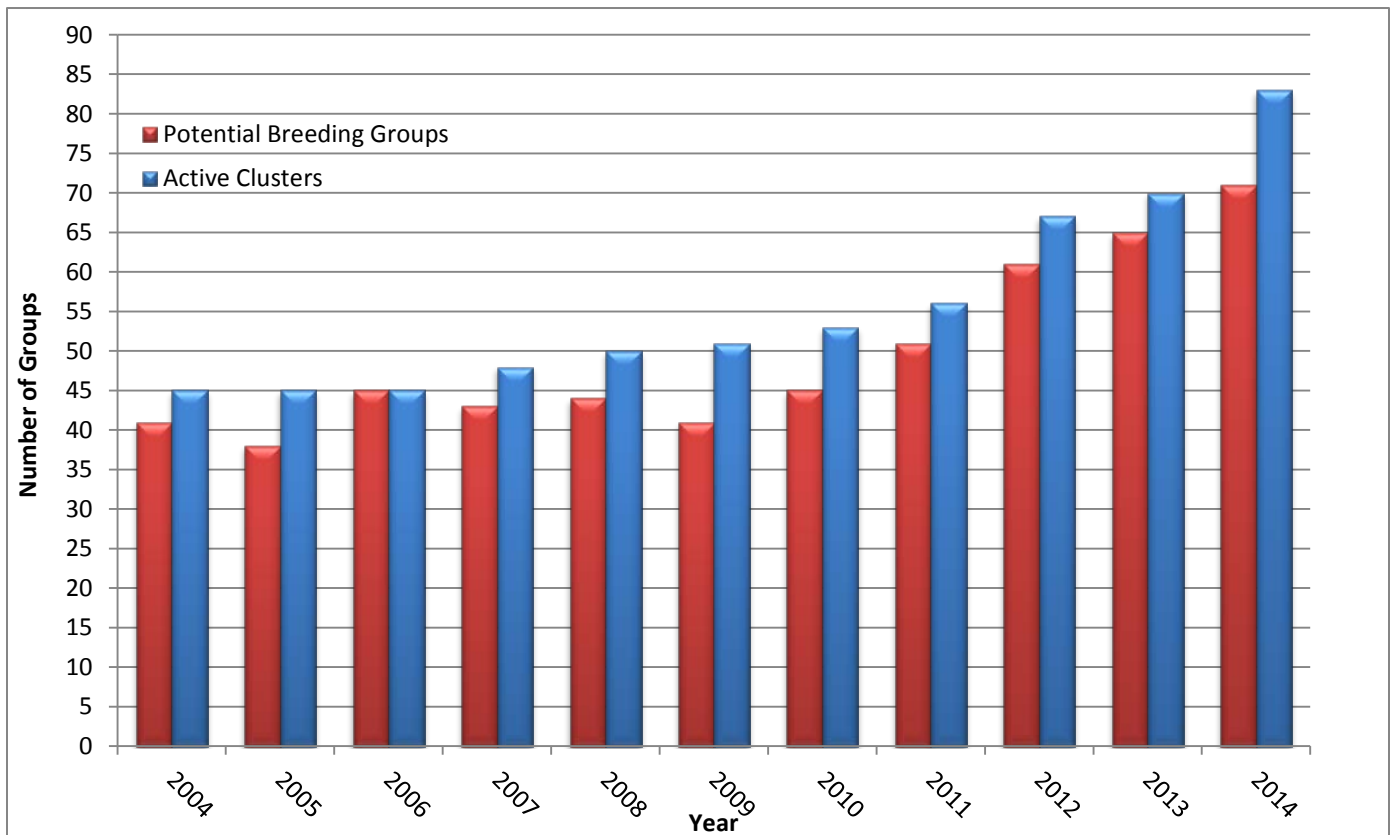
USDA Forest Service-Savannah River Fiscal Year 2014 Savannah River Site Environmental Report

In support of the environmental stewardship mission, the USDA Forest Service – Savannah River (USFS-SR) manages natural resources at the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (DOE-SRS). Operating under an Interagency Agreement with the SRS Operations Office, the USFS-SR follows SRS' Strategic Plan goals and objectives to implement the United States Department of Energy's Natural Resources Management Plan for the SRS.

The following initiatives and accomplishments reflect the various ways in which USFS-SR worked to implement the plan in fiscal year 2014.

Maintained and improved habitat to meet recovery population objectives for threatened, endangered and sensitive species

USFS-SR continued to improve habitat conditions for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker by removing brush and small hardwood vegetation from over 235 acres of longleaf pine forest. This is a reduction in acres over previous years as our heavy machinery was diverted to clear roads after the ice storm. Prescribed fire was also used extensively to reduce hazardous fuels and to improve habitat on a larger scale. Successful habitat restoration increased the number of active red-cockaded woodpecker clusters from three in 1985 to 83 in fiscal year 2014.



Number of red-cockaded woodpecker active clusters at SRS

Additionally, the golden eagle was observed foraging at SRS which is the first observation of this kind. This reclusive species was previously thought to come down only to the Appalachian Mountains. A new population of the endangered smooth purple coneflower also was found.

Managed natural resources and harvested forest products

The USFS-SR sold 74.5 million cubic feet of forest products through active forest management. Forest products were sold to meet security needs; encourage habitat development for threatened, endangered and sensitive species; promote forest health; and generate revenue. Management activities were and continue to be implemented in support of the Site's nuclear mission and in compliance with best management practices.

Evaluated the effects of management on the environment

Through partnerships and collaborations with a number of universities as well as with USDA Forest Service Research Stations, the USFS-SR added applied knowledge and understanding in support of the Interagency Agreement, including:

- The understory cover of grasses, herbs and woody species from the 2010 inventory was completed for the entire SRS to help with wildlife and endangered species management.
- The amount of understory hazardous wildland fuels and the fuel reaction intensities were mapped across the SRS. This information supports prescribed fire and wildfire management and was obtained in cooperation with the Pacific Northwest Fire Lab.
- Models of snag (standing dead trees) occurrence were developed to support wildlife habitat management for cavity nesting species at SRS.
- A comprehensive comparison of the ice damage to longleaf and loblolly pine stands, which occurred as a result of the February 2014 ice storm, was completed.

Excelled in environmental and occupational safety and health performance

The USFS-SR had one restricted workday due to injury, no lost workdays due to injuries and two Occupational Safety and Health Administration 300 Log recordable injuries. Employees and contractors reported 296,820 hours worked and 245,004 vehicle-miles driven.

USFS-SR is an active participant in the DOE Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS), which has resulted in a higher level of safety awareness and sound application of safety requirements. USFS-SR submitted the required annual ISMS declaration to DOE-SRS on December 17, 2014.

Continued environmental restoration

USFS-SR designed and began construction to repair gully erosion downstream of the F-02 outfall under an South Carolina Electric and Gas (SCE&G) power line. The gully, approximately 30 feet deep, developed due to configuration changes in F-area. USFS-SR worked with SCE&G to safely break down the vertical gully banks and began installation of a concrete drop structure to prevent further erosion.

SRS's Soil and Groundwater Closure Projects, administered by USFS-SR, treated approximately 17 million gallons of tritiated water. This is a dramatic increase over 2013 accomplishments. The increase is due to favorable irrigation conditions and 17 additional acres that were added to the treatment area. This project employs a natural remedy (phytoremediation), using vegetative processes, to reduce risk to the environment.

Additionally, USFS-SR managed 2,344 acres of vegetation caps through mowing, pesticide and herbicide application, prescribed fire and seeding. Following Winter Storm Pax, USFS-SR cleared access to 3,453 well sites to allow SRS personnel to continue the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) mandated water and groundwater monitoring.

Safely maintained infrastructure in an environmentally sound state of operational readiness

USFS-SR cleared and abated hazards from Winter Storm Pax and also repaired road surfacing on more than 1,295 miles of SRS secondary roads. Due to Winter Storm Pax, all secondary roads on site were closed with fallen trees, hazardous trees and overhead conditions, and debris. These conditions also damaged or blocked 85 miles of Site exterior boundary fence. All 85 miles of exterior boundary fence were cleared of debris, and fence and trespass warning signs were repaired. Normal road maintenance activities were also performed throughout the rest of the year, including blading and calcium chloride application for dust abatement. .

USFS-SR constructed 0.59 miles of secondary roads and replaced four culverts in support of site activities and maintained 11.6 miles of multipurpose trails used primarily by SRS wellness programs. Due to Winter Storm Pax, trails were closed from February 2014 through the end of the fiscal year, but cleanup was completed in fiscal year 2015. Twelve miles of Site boundary along the Savannah River was inspected and maintained, including replacement of trespass warning signs.

Reduced risk of catastrophic wildland fires through systematic and safe application of prescribed fire

USFS-SR, fire management burned 9,821 acres of hazardous fuel reduction and suppressed 11 wildfires totaling 19 acres. The prescribed fire acres were lower than usual do to Winter Storm Pax that struck during the peak of our burning season.

Smokey Bear went to 18 local elementary schools, visiting 1,720 children. Smokey also participated in the New Ellenton Atomic City Festival with 500 contacts.

Communicated SRS stewardship

USFS-SR outreach efforts to educate stakeholders about natural resource management included participation in Take Our Children to Work Day, SRS Ultimate Turkey Hunt, and SRS Safety Blitz. Public communication included various reports showcasing monthly accomplishments, as well as a presence at community events, including the City of Aiken's Earth Day Celebration, Atomic City festival and the New Ellenton Christmas parade. Internal and external planning and communications included participation in the SRS Citizens Advisory Board combined and committee meetings.

USDA Forest Service–Savannah River

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